

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07

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R 181436Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8698

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 4693

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ET

R PFOR US US

SUBJ: COMMERCIAL DISCRIMINATION BASED ON JEWISH FAITH

REF: STATE 154688

1. PER INSTRUCTIONS REFTEL, AMBASSADOR RAISED PROBLEM WITH MINISTER OF ECONOMY IMADI ON LATTER'S RETURN FROM ABROAD JULY 8. FURNISHED HIM LANGUAGE OF INVITATION TO BID ISSUED BY SYRIAN DEFENSE MINISTRY.

2. IMADI'S IMMEDIATE REACTION WAS ONE OF SHOCK. HE AGREED WITH AMBASSADOR IT WAS THE CRUDEST POSSIBLE EXAMPLE OF UNACCEPTABLE LANGUGAGE HE HAD EVER SEEN AND WENT AGAINST ALL THAT ARAB BOYCOTT SUPPOSEDLY STOOD FOR. HE CONFIRMED THAT BOYCOTT CORRESPONDENCE ISSUED UNDER HIS RESPONSIBILITY AS MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND FOREIGN TRADE--SARG BOYCOTT OFFICE IS LOCATED IN HIS MINISTRY--NEVER CONTAINED LANGUAGE CITING JEWS OR RELIGION.

3. IMADI SAID, HOWEVER, THAT MINISTRY OF DEFENSE RAN A SEPARATE PROCUREMENT/CONTRACTING OPERATION AND THIS WAS NOT UNDER HIS CONTROL. HE PROMISED TO INVESTIGATE THE MATTER AND TO BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH AMBASSADOR WHEN HE HAD FURTHER INFORMATION.

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4. IN MEETING JULY 17, IMADI ADVISED THE AMBASSADOR THAT HE HAD INSTRUCTED DEPUTY MINISTER OF ECONOMY AZMEH TO PURSUE THIS QUESTION WITH OFFICERS IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE. NO ONE IN THAT MINISTRY ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE LANGUAGE. THE TENDER HAD BEEN WITHDRAWN AND WOULD BE REISSUED WITHOUT OFFENSIVE REFERENCES. IMADI SAID HE COULD ONLY CONCLUDE THAT LANGUAGE HAD BEEN SLIPPED INTO THAT TENDER BY "SOME TROUBLEMAKER." HE ASKED IF WE WOULD BE ABLE TO SUPPLY HIM WITH ARABIC LANGUAGE ORIGINAL.

5. ACTION REQUESTED:

THAT USDOC REQUEST INDUSTRY SOURCES TO PROVIDE ARABIC LANGUAGE ORIGINAL TO COMMERCE AND FORWARD DIRECTLY TO THIS EMBASSY MARKED ATTENTION AMBASSADOR.
MURPHY

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